

WHAREDALE RUGBY UNION FOOTBALL CLUB



Wharfedale RUFC Social Media Policy

Background

Members of Wharfedale Rugby Union Football Club (WRUFC) enjoy the opportunities and rewards of a community based rugby club combined with affiliation to Yorkshire Rugby Football Union (YRFU) and the Rugby Football Union (RFU). It is subsequently expected that members will uphold the ethos of the club in all social media interactions. Members will not act in such a way that the image of WRUFC is brought into disrepute nor in a way that harms it's immediate and wider rugby community

Social media can be, when appropriate, an effective tool and is commonly used by the WRUFC community to disseminate information, express their views, comments, ideas and criticism on a whole range of issues. WRUFC expects members to use social media in a respectful and responsible manner. Social media should not be used to insult, present offensive or inappropriate content or to misrepresent the club or any member of WRUFC or the external rugby community.

The purpose of this policy is to set standards of behaviour for the use of social media that are consistent with the broader values and expectations of the WRUFC community. This social media club policy aims to protect the reputation of the club, committee and members it serves. WRUFC also supports the RFU guidance on social media. (Appendix 1).

Scope

This policy applies to all social media forums and accounts both existing at the time of its publication, and that may emerge over time. This policy applies to all club members, players, coaches, parents of mini & juniors, and anybody wishing to establish an account bearing any identification of, or alluding to association with Wharfedale RUFC.

Definitions and Abbreviations

Term	Definition for the purposes of the Social Media Policy
The Club	Wharfedale Rugby Union Football Club
Social Media	Any computer/tablet/mobile/digital/web based platform where members can create and share content including (but not limited to): Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, Google+, Formspring, YouTube and MySpace, MSN, Stumbleupon, WRFC Website; team sites such as Pitchero, and includes email and mobile devices.
Club Committee	The General Committee of the Club or the Mini & Junior Committee. Any approval of the committee refers to a majority vote of a quorate meeting, in accordance with the Club Rules.



Regulations

1. Designated social media accounts

- 1.1. It is not permitted for a social media account to carry the official name or badge of the club or imply an association in any way with the club without the official approval of the club committee.
- 1.2. Social media accounts registered and approved by the club committee will become subject to these social media guidelines and uphold this policy at all times.
- 1.3. Any representative of the club wishing to establish a social media presence on behalf of the club must apply in writing to the club committee, outlining the purpose of the social media channel, demonstrating the benefits to the club and how the practical aspects of capturing and sharing content over the channel will be managed, in addition to outlining how this policy will be upheld in relation to security and reputational risk
- 1.4. The club reserves the right to decline any requests received on reasonable grounds including lack of resource to effectively manage and engage across the channel, the reputation risks or if the purpose outlined is contra to the general interests/ focus of the club as a whole.
- 1.5. The club can remove permission for a social media account to exist as an official account where the committee feel that the rationale for the benefit to the club has dissolved, management of the account has become problematic or there has been a repeated breach of the social media policy.

2. Ownership of official social media accounts

- 2.1. All social media accounts established on behalf of the club remain under the ownership of the club at all times. Administration access to the accounts must be given up when requested by the club committee.
- 2.2. Social media accounts established on behalf of the club will present a professional image/ shop window at all times with a description of the club and link to the official club web site where appropriate.

3. Administrators of accounts

- 3.1. Accounts will have a minimum of three representatives acting as administrators (one of which will be a club committee member) to ensure that accounts can be accessed easily during times of holiday and absence.
- 3.2. Administrators of the clubs official social media accounts must agree to sign up to this social media policy and conduct themselves in a way that is appropriate in upholding and building a positive image of the club at all times.
- 3.3. Administrators of the clubs official social media accounts agree to use password protocols, and agree that responsibility for protecting this password and access to the account (e.g. logging out effectively of browsers) remains their responsibility at all times. Any breach of this protocol must be immediately communicated to the club committee and steps taken to limit the impact.
- 3.4. Administrators of the clubs official social media accounts will agree not to act on any conflicts of interest, and must not promote their own products or services across the official social media accounts of the club unless expressly agreed in advance by the club committee.
- 3.5. Where an administrator is associated with more than one club, E.g. Rugby Coach, the committee reserve the right to restrict the promotion of activities through the official club channels to those relevant specifically to the club.
- 3.6. Administrators looking to endorse, promote or engage in a national campaign on behalf of official partners such as RFU or sponsors or unofficial partners such as community groups,



must first seek approval from the club committee to mobilise the social media channel to this effect.

- 3.7. For the purpose of effective management and measurement, administrators will agree when requested to do so, to use relevant social media management tools/ protocols as requested by the club committee. The committee reserve the right to evolve these tools/ approaches in keeping with new trends and approaches to managing and being effective in social media delivery.
- 3.8. Administrators are encouraged to attend relevant training and workshops relevant to the delivery of social media on behalf of the club as deemed appropriate.

4. Responsibility to Club Members

- 4.1. Any representative of the official social media accounts for the club must not by their actions jeopardise the privacy of any member associated with the club. Data gathered through social media channels should not be published without the consent of the membership. This includes allowing members the option of opting out of any social media directory produced.
- 4.2. Administrators agree not to spam or communicate with members of social media groups/ forums in a way that could be determined as being of detriment to the reputation of the club.
- 4.3. Administrators agree not to pursue public debates that could bring the club and/or the game of Rugby into disrepute more widely or proactively provoke members of the club to do the same.
- 4.4. Confidentiality must be upheld across the club social media channels at all times, no direct messages should be made public without the consent of the person responsible for the original post and content discussed within committee meetings may not be disclosed on social media unless agreed by those present.

5. Responsibility of Members

- 5.1. Members are expected to show respect to others, including members of the WRUFC and wider rugby community and act at all times within the core values of the game.
- 5.2. Members are also expected to give due respect to the reputation and good name of WRUFC.
- 5.3. When using Social Media, members are expected to ensure that they:

Respect the rights and confidentiality of others;

Do not impersonate or falsely represent another person;

Do not bully, intimidate, abuse, harass or threaten others;

Do not make defamatory comments;

Do not use offensive or threatening language or resort to personal abuse towards each other or members of the WRUFC or the wider rugby community of opposition teams, players, coaches, supporters; referees or other rugby societies or organisations;

Do not post content that is hateful, threatening, pornographic or incites violence against others;

Do not post content that harms the reputation and good standing of WRUFC or those within its community;

- 5.4. Members are expected report any content that they encounter that is in breach of this policy to the Club Secretary.

6. Social Media Content

- 6.1. The content posted across official social media accounts must be relevant, age appropriate and uphold the club's reputation at all times.



- 6.2. Administrators distributing content on behalf of the club will ensure that the appropriate agreements have been sought on any photographs or film footage uploaded and shared within social media environments across the official accounts.
- 6.3. Administrators of club official accounts must be aware that any content (photos and film) posted on social media passes on ownership of the material to the social media provider e.g. Facebook Therefore, caution must be extended in passing on rights over club material (of value) to a third party.
- 6.4. Administrators must make all best efforts to ensure privacy of players etc. especially when injuries etc. occur. Videos/photos of injuries should not appear on official sites without express consent of the individual.
- 6.5. Any content shared from online environments will link and/or credit the original source of the content.

7. Safeguarding Children on Social Media

- 7.1. Children under the age of 13 are not permitted to establish a Facebook account. The nature of social media and cookie tracking in digital environments puts children under this age at considerable risk.
- 7.2. No official club social media channel or Administrator of the clubs official accounts will use social media to communicate or engage with children aged under 13. Please note that parental permission does not constitute permission to breach this element of the policy. For further information please see the CPSU guidelines for protecting children in digital environments.

8. Breach of Policy

- 8.1. A breach of this policy may also involve a breach of other WRUFC policies, and should be read in conjunction with the RFU, and WRUFC, codes of conduct, which apply to all members regardless of category or role.
- 8.2. A breach of this policy will be considered by the committee, or their delegates, and will be dealt within the current disciplinary structure on a case-by-case basis.
- 8.3. All reports of cyber bullying and other technology misuses will be investigated fully and may result in notification to the police where the WRUFC is obliged to do so. Sanctions may include, but are not limited to, suspension, or banning from membership of WRUFC. Members must be aware that in certain circumstances where a crime has been committed, they may be subject to a criminal investigation by the police over which WRUFC will have no control.

9. Closure

- 9.1. The club committee reserves the right to update this policy.

**Wharfedale RUFC General Committee
November 2017**



Appendix 1

RFU Guidance: Social media for clubs

Social networking, such as Twitter, Facebook, internet blogs and other online sites, offers tremendous opportunities for rugby to communicate and engage with a growing audience as well as its existing members, supporters and players.

The RFU is keen to promote the safe and responsible use of social networking technology but also to make its members aware of the potential risks and to share best practice.

Participants should be aware that comments, which bring the game into disrepute, or are threatening, abusive, indecent or insulting, might lead to disciplinary action.

Comments that include a reference to a person's ethnic origin, colour, race, nationality, faith, gender, sexual orientation or disability may attract a high disciplinary sanction.

Comments can also attract civil and criminal action. Nearly 5,000 offences involving Facebook and Twitter were reported to police in 2012 and 653 people charged.

General guidance

- These are public forums, so treat them as such
- Individuals and organisations are strictly responsible for any posting on his/their account/s
- Re-posting or re-tweeting inappropriate content represents an endorsement of that content and can be actionable
- Do not use abusive, derogatory, vulgar or sexual language
- Do not criticise or imply bias in match officials
- At all times, exercise discretion and respect for clubs, players, fans and the game's partners
- Deleting or apologising publicly for an improper posting does not prevent disciplinary action being taken
- Consider "protecting" Tweets and changing security/visibility of Facebook accounts

Clubs and Constituent Bodies

Clubs and Constituent Bodies (CBs) should be aware that they can be vicariously liable for material published by employees in the course of their employment, for example on an official website, Facebook site or Twitter feed, or published by employees outside work via a work email address or a work Twitter handle.

Clubs can also be liable for third party comments and postings made in their website forums or on their Facebook pages.

We recommend that clubs and CBs:

- Clearly identify who is responsible for posting and maintaining social networking and internet sites
- Set standards for content generated in line with the RFU's Core Values and the guidelines above



- Establish protocols for monitoring output, moderating content in online forums and removing offensive postings
- Hold members to account for any breaches

Safeguarding

The [RFU's Safeguarding Policy](#) advises against coaches having direct personal communication with children unless in exceptional circumstances and coaches and club officials should not communicate with children through social networking sites such as Facebook and Twitter, nor should they be "friends" with children or comment on their status.

The RFU works closely with the NSPCC's Child Protection in Sport Unit, which provides comprehensive guidance and resources relating to this issue [here](#) (PDF332kB)

Players and officials

Individuals need to understand that they are personally responsible and liable for their comments and postings. At all times you should exercise discretion and be respectful of other players, teams, officials, organisations and brands. What you regard as "banter" could be regarded as embarrassing or hurtful by a wider audience and bring the game into disrepute.

In short, follow the general guidelines above and:

- Don't comment if you have any concerns about the consequences
- Don't link to unsuitable content
- Don't get into disputes with audience
- Don't share or elicit personal detail

But

- Do show your personality and be approachable
- Do share your achievements
- Do let people know what it is like to be a player/official
- Do post regular comments to grow and engage with an audience